AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A communication device, comprising:

a multifunctional keyboard having a plurality of letter keys, wherein each letter key is configured to generate a keyboard output signal;

a processor coupled to the multifunctional keyboard that is configured to convert each keyboard output signal generated by the letter keys into a character code;

means for converting each keyboard output signal generated by the letter keys into a telephony tone signal;

a keyboard mode control software module operating on the processor that controls whether the keyboard output signals from the letter keys are converted into character codes or telephony tone signals; and

a plurality of software applications stored in a memory of the communication device and executed by the processor, the plurality of software applications each having an associated keyboard mode;

the keyboard mode control software module being operable to automatically determine the keyboard mode associated with an active one of the plurality of software applications, wherein the keyboard mode is used by the keyboard mode control software module to automatically determine whether the keyboard output signals from the letter keys are converted into character codes or telephony tone signals.

2. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the multifunctional keyboard is a QWERTY style keyboard.

3. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the converting means is the processor.

4. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the converting means is a tone signal generator.

5. (Original) The communication device of claim 4, wherein the tone signal generator also generates an audible tone when one of the letter keys is pressed.

6. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the keyboard mode control software module also controls whether the keyboard output signals from the letter keys are converted into both character codes and telephony tone signals.

7. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the telephony tone signal generated for each letter key corresponds to an integer ranging from two (2) to nine (9).

8. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the telephony tone signals are Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) signals.

9. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the character codes are American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) character codes.

10. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein:

the plurality of keys on the multifunctional keyboard also includes a plurality of number keys, each of which is configured to generate a keyboard output signals;

the processor is also configured to convert the keyboard output signals generated by the number keys into character codes;

the converting means also converts the keyboard output signals generated by the number keys into telephony tone signals; and

the keyboard mode control software also controls whether the keyboard output signals from the number keys are converted into character codes or telephony tone signals.

11. Cancelled

12. (Previously Presented) The communication device of claim 1,

wherein the memory is coupled to the processor and includes a service store memory location that associates each software application with the associated keyboard mode.

13. Cancelled

14. (Original) The communication device of claim 1, wherein the multifunctional keyboard is uniformly distributed across a housing of the communication device such that one half of the

letter keys are located on a left-hand side of the housing and the remaining letter keys are located on a right-hand side of the housing.

15. (Original) The communication device of claim 14, wherein the letter keys on the left-hand side of the housing are tilted at a negative angle from vertical and the letter keys on the right-hand side of the housing are tilted at a positive angle from vertical.

Claims 16 and 17. Cancelled

18. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling an operational mode of a multifunctional keyboard for a communication device, comprising the steps of:

providing a telephony mode in which output signals from the multifunctional keyboard generate telephony tone signals;

providing a data mode in which output signals from the multifunctional keyboard generate character codes; and

receiving a mode trigger signal that controls whether the communication device should operate in the telephony mode or the data mode

wherein the step of receiving a mode trigger signal that controls whether the communication device should operate in the telephony mode or the data mode is performed by a method comprising the steps of:

providing a service store memory location that includes a log of the operational mode associated with a plurality of applications available on the communication device;

receiving the mode trigger signal, wherein the mode trigger signal indicates that one of the applications has been executed; and

accessing the service store memory location to detect whether the telephony mode or the data mode is associated with the active application.

Claims 19-26. Cancelled

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, comprising the additional step of generating an audible tone when a key on the multifunctional keyboard is pressed.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the audible tone may be enabled or disabled by a communication device user.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the audible tone generated while the communication device is executing the telephony mode is different from the audible tone generated while the communication device is executing the data mode.

30. (Currently Amended) A communication device, comprising:

a multifunctional keyboard, wherein a plurality of keys on the multifunctional keyboard correspond to both a number and a letter, and wherein each of the keys generates a keyboard output signal;

a processor coupled to the multifunctional keyboard that is configured to convert each keyboard output signal generated by the plurality of keys into a character code;

means for converting each keyboard output signal generated by the plurality of keys into a telephony tone signal; and

a keyboard mode control software module operating on the processor that controls whether the keyboard output signal for each of the plurality of keys represents the number or the letter corresponding to the key, and also controls whether the keyboard output signals from the plurality of keys are converted into character codes or telephony tone signals;

wherein the keyboard mode control software module automatically determines whether the keyboard output signals from the plurality of keys are converted into character codes or telephony tone signals based on a keyboard mode that is associated with an active software program.

31. (Original) The communication device of claim 30, wherein the multifunctional keyboard is a QWERTY style keyboard.

32. (Original) The communication device of claim 30, wherein the converting means is the processor.

33. (Original) The communication device of claim 30, wherein the converting means is a tone signal generator.

34. (Original) The communication device of claim 30, wherein the telephony tone signals are Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) signals.

35. (Original) The communication device of claim 30, wherein the character codes are American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) character codes.

36. (Original) The communication device of claim 30, wherein the multifunctional keyboard is symmetrically distributed across a housing of the communication device.

37. (Original) The communication device of claim 36, wherein a first portion of the letter keys are tilted at a negative angle from vertical and a second portion of the letter keys are tilted at a positive angle from vertical.